

## Message Text

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TAGS: MASS, SOPN, YO

SUBJECT: NEW YORK TIMES ARTICLE ON ARMS SALES TO  
YUGOSLAVIA

REF: BELGRADE 3172

1. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF ARTICLE IN NEW YORK TIMES MAY 14  
BY DAVID BINDER.

2. TITLE: YUGOSLAVS DELAY US ARMS BUYING  
- SUBTITLE: TALKS ON ADVANCED WEAPONS ARE POSTPONED  
- BECAUSE OF PUBLICITY AROUND DEAL  
- DATELINE: WASHINGTON, MAY 13

3. AMERICAN AND YUGOSLAV OFFICIALS DISCLOSED TODAY THAT  
YUGOSLAV PURCHASES OF ADVANCED AMERICAN WEAPONS HAD BEEN  
INDEFINITELY POSTPONED BECAUSE THE PENDING SALE RECEIVED  
UNDESIRABLE PUBLICITY IN THE UNITED STATES.

4. IN INTERVIEWS, THE OFFICIALS CONFIRMED THAT YUGOSLAVIA  
HAD EXPRESSED THE INTENTION TO BUY AMERICAN WIRE-GUIDED  
ANTITANK MISSILES LAST WINTER. IT WOULD HAVE BEEN ITS FIRST  
MAJOR PURCHASE OF NEW AMERICAN MILITARY EQUIPMENT SINCE  
1961.

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5. SHORTLY AFTER THIS INTENTION WAS CONFIDENTIALLY CONVEYED, A SPATE OF ARTICLES APPEARED IN AMERICAN NEWSPAPERS DISCLOSING THE PLANS. SOME OF THE ARTICLES SUGGESTED THAT THE PURCHASE REPRESENTED A POLITICAL SHIFT AND TRACED IT TO YUGOSLAV CONCERN OVER A POSSIBLE SOVIET MILITARY THREAT. THE ARTICLES LINKED THIS CONCERN TO THE EVENTUAL PASSING OF PRESIDENT TITO, WHO TURNS 84 ON MAY 25.

6. PLAN NOT CANCELLED. "THE YUGOSLAVS WENT RIGHT UP THE WALL BECAUSE OF THE ARTICLES," SAID AN AMERICAN OFFICIAL CONCERNED WITH YUGOSLAV AFFAIRS.

7. ANOTHER AMERICAN OFFICIAL CONCERNED WITH THE ARMS PURCHASE REMEMBERED: "LATER IN JANUARY THE YUGOSLAVS HIT ME IN THE CHOPS WITH THOSE ARTICLES."

8. THE YUGOSLAV OFFICIAL SAID: "AFTER THAT WE MADE A PAUSE, BECAUSE WE DO NOT LIKE TO BE MANIPULATED. WE DO NOT CANCEL THE PURCHASE PLAN."

9. "EVERYTHING HAS STOPPED," A HIGH-RANKING AMERICAN OFFICIAL REPORTED. "WE HAD HOPED THAT THE THING WOULD DIE DOWN. AND IT APPEARED IT HAD. THEN EVANS AND NOVAK CAME OUT WITH A COLUMN IN APRIL THAT SAID THE DEAL WAS ON WHEN IT WASN'T. THE YUGOSLAVS WERE OFFENDED AT THE IMPLICATION THAT THEIRS WAS MORE THAN JUST A SIMPLE ARMS ACQUISITION." THE EVANS AND NOVAK COLUMN APPEARED APRIL 15.

10. ANOTHER AMERICAN OFFICIAL SAID THE AFFAIR ILLUSTRATED YUGOSLAVIA'S DESIRE TO MAINTAIN AN IMAGE OF INDEPENDENCE IN A CHANGING WORLD.

11. "IT WAS A TIME WHEN WE WERE SUPPORTING ONE SIDE IN THE ANGOLA WAR AND THE YUGOSLAVS WERE BACKING THE SOVIET FACTION," HE WENT ON. "BUYING NEW ARMS FROM US WOULD HAVE CAUSED THEM EMBARRASSMENT AMONG THEIR WORLD CLIENTELE."

12. PLANE ENGINES SOUGHT. THE OFFICIAL SAID THAT IN ADDITION TO EXPRESSING AN INTEREST IN THE SO-CALLED TOW ANTITANK MISSILES, THE YUGOSLAV DEFENSE MINISTRY HAD MADE UNCLASSIFIED

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SOUNDINGS ABOUT THE POSSIBLE PURCHASE OF AIRCRAFT ENGINES.

13. YUGOSLAVIA MANUFACTURES MOST OF ITS WEAPONS NEEDS. FROM 1951 TO 1961 THE TITO GOVERNMENT RECEIVED OVER \$750 MILLION IN AMERICAN MILITARY AID, AND PURCHASED AN ADDITIONAL \$1 BILLION IN WEAPONS UNDER FAVORABLE CREDIT TERMS IN THE SAME PERIOD.

14. SINCE THEN THE TITO GOVERNMENT HAS PURCHASED REPLACEMENT PARTS AND AMMUNITION FOR THE AMERICAN-MADE EQUIPMENT FOR LESS THAN \$1 MILLION A YEAR. IT HAS ALSO BOUGHT LARGE QUANTITIES OF SOVIET WEAPONS, INCLUDING SURFACE-TO-AIR MISSILES, SINCE 1963.

15. THE UNITED STATES AND YUGOSLAVIA ENDED LARGE-SCALE MILITARY COOPERATION IN 1961 WHEN MARSHAL TITO ASSUMED A FRIENDLIER STANCE TOWARD THE SOVIET UNION AND HEADED WHAT WASHINGTON PERCEIVED AS A BASICALLY HOSTILE MOVEMENT OF NONALIGNED NATIONS.

16. THE RELATIONSHIP HAD BEGUN IN THE WAKE OF STALIN'S MOVE IN 1948 TO OUST YUGOSLAVIA FROM THE MOSCOW-BASED COMMUNIST PARTY ORGANIZATION CALLED THE COMINFORM.

17. DIPLOMATIC FEELERS WERE EXTENDED BY BOTH PRESIDENT TITO AND THE UNITED STATES ABOUT REVIVING CERTAIN ELEMENTS OF THE YUGOSLAV-AMERICAN SECURITY RELATIONSHIP IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE SOVIET-BLOC INVASION OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA IN AUGUST 1968. BUT NO PRACTICAL MOVES FOLLOWED.

18. THE YUGOSLAV GOVERNMENT BEGAN TALKING AGAIN ABOUT SPECIFIC WEAPONS NEEDS LAST AUTUMN, BASING ITS PROPOSALS ON PURELY MILITARY CONSIDERATIONS, THE YUGOSLAV AND AMERICAN OFFICIALS REPORTED.

19. THE FORD ADMINISTRATION GAVE FAVORABLE CONSIDERATION TO THE REQUESTS, EVEN FOR LATE-MODEL WEAPONRY SUCH AS THE ANTITANK MISSILES, BECAUSE IT DESIRES TO PRESERVE SOMETHING OF A SECURITY RELATIONSHIP WITH BELGRADE, THE AMERICANS REMARKED.

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20. THE YUGOSLAV OFFICIAL SAID THAT EVEN THOUGH HIS GOVERNMENT WAS OPPOSED TO THE APPEARANCE OF BEING "MANIPULATED" IT WOULD EVENTUALLY GO AHEAD AND BUY THE AMERICAN-MADE ARMS "BECAUSE NOT TO DO SO WOULD ALSO BE MANIPULATION." KISSINGER

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